

CHAPTER V

PLANNING IS A RATIONAL DISCIPLINE THAT MAY BE TAUGHT

By introducing a systematic approach or science into preparation of the comprehensive city plan and into carrying out a comprehensive city plan, Harland Bartholomew had created a discipline that could be taught. He devoted a good part of his professional career to teaching it.

THE FIRST PUPIL

Harland Bartholomew was self-taught. His two years at Rutgers in civil engineering gave him little, if anything, on urban planning. The exhibit assembled by the Newark librarian, John Cotton Dana, in 1912 gave Bartholomew an overview of the work that had been done in urban planning prior to that time. After that, he kept up by attendance at national conferences and reading the literature of the planning and associated local government fields. He was an avid reader. He did not need much sleep, often reading until two a.m. Travel was devoted to reading also.

Ability in language is essential to the professional planner. A planner must be able to communicate and to express sometimes complex thoughts simply and concisely. This is an ability no one obtains without a struggle and in this Harland Bartholomew was lucky. John Dana, an

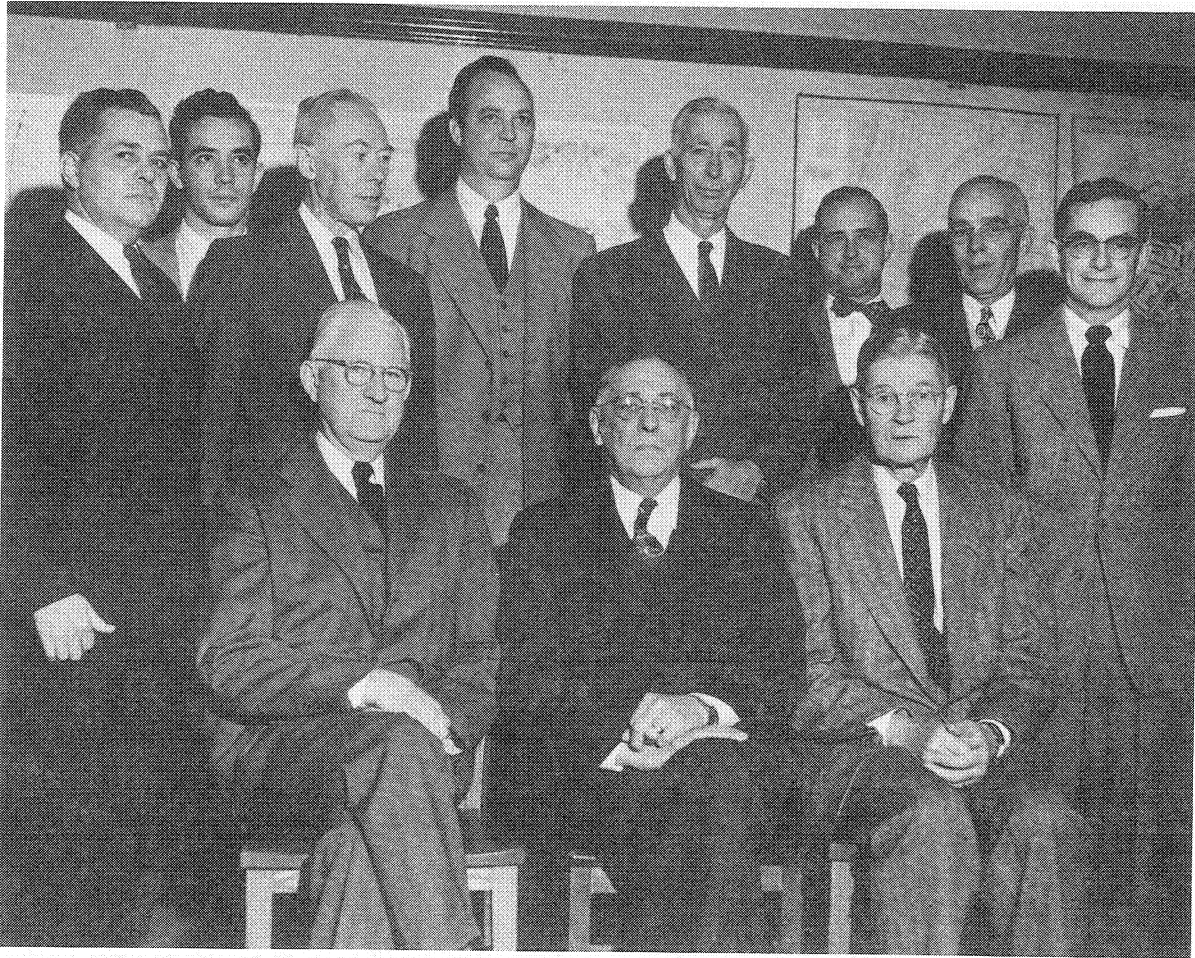
expert in language, spent hours with Bartholomew teaching him to write by carefully reviewing his drafts of the Newark planning reports and going over them with him. Dana was a member of the Central Planning Board. In later years, Bartholomew said:

Dana was a great student of English. . . I'd write a report and he'd get me to bring it to him and would correct it, saying: 'You study it and see what I have done. I want you to learn to write; after forty years you'll begin to be able to write English. (1)

Harland Bartholomew was an apt pupil and learned quickly. He was his best pupil, teaching himself to be a professional urban planner.

TEACHING AT ILLINOIS

The non-resident professorship at the University of Illinois provided the real opportunity to teach his "science" of city planning. He would take the train to Champaign, give his lecture to the class in city planning, frequently meet with students, and talk to the faculty, particularly Karl Lohmann. The lectures required him to keep up with activities and accomplishments



46 Harland Bartholomew and the University of Illinois Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning Faculty in 1954. Front row left to right: Bartholomew, Karl B. Lohmann, and Otto Schaeffer. Standing left to right: Victor Hyde, Charles Harris, Stanley White, Jack Wood, Irving Peterson, Walter Keith, Don Morgan, and Phil Lewis.

in the entire field of urban planning in the country, as he was charged with doing far more than just telling the students what he and his firm were doing. The lectures also required him to further systematize and organize his principles and procedures, both for the preparation of and the carrying out of the comprehensive city plans. This was a real opportunity to stop and review what was being done and how it was being done before an audience of curious and questioning students.

Karl Lohmann attended all of Harland

Bartholomew's lectures. He was also an avid student of urban planning and occasionally undertook professional assignments himself, usually for local governments in the Champaign-Urbana area. All of this was incorporated into Lohmann's book, *Principles of City Planning* (2), published in 1931 and used as the text book in the city planning course.

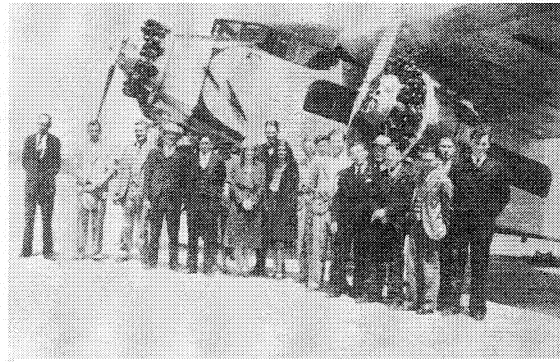
Lohmann's book is unusually comprehensive, including 24 chapters. In its introduction, Lohmann states:

City planning is the effort to control, to guide, and to accomplish the physical development of towns and cities and thereby to provide for the people who are living and working in them, the best possible environment. Its concern is largely with the urban unit as a whole, inclusive of the regional setting.

General reviews of urban physical characteristics, the historical development of cities, and an account of the city planning movement in America start the book. After talking of the city plan as a whole, the book plunges into the elements of the plan in a manner similar to one of Harland Bartholomew's city plans of the period. Of interest are chapters on utilities, housing, and, of course, zoning. "The Beautiful in the City Plan" has its own chapter. The book concludes with chapters on Regional Planning, on the Legal Authority for City Planning, on financing the proposed improvements, and on "Educational and Promotive Work in City Planning." There is no chapter on the public school system in the city plan.

Lohmann had numerous authorities, including Harland Bartholomew, review chapters while the book was being written. Each chapter concludes with its own bibliography and "Questions for Discussion." Looked at broadly, it truly systematized city planning.

While Harland Bartholomew discussed Lohmann's book with him and helped with illustrations and review of individual chapters, Lohmann's book caused some conflict between the two men. At the time it was being prepared, Harland Bartholomew was writing a book entitled, *City Planning in Practice*. An outline and drafts of some of the 15 chapters remain. However, advent of the Great Depression and the accompanying drop-off in professional engagements left Harland Bartholomew without the resources



47 Karl B. Lohmann was a great innovator. Here he takes his 1930 class in *City Planning* in a Ford Tri-motor on a flight over Chicago. Wonder what their mothers thought of that?

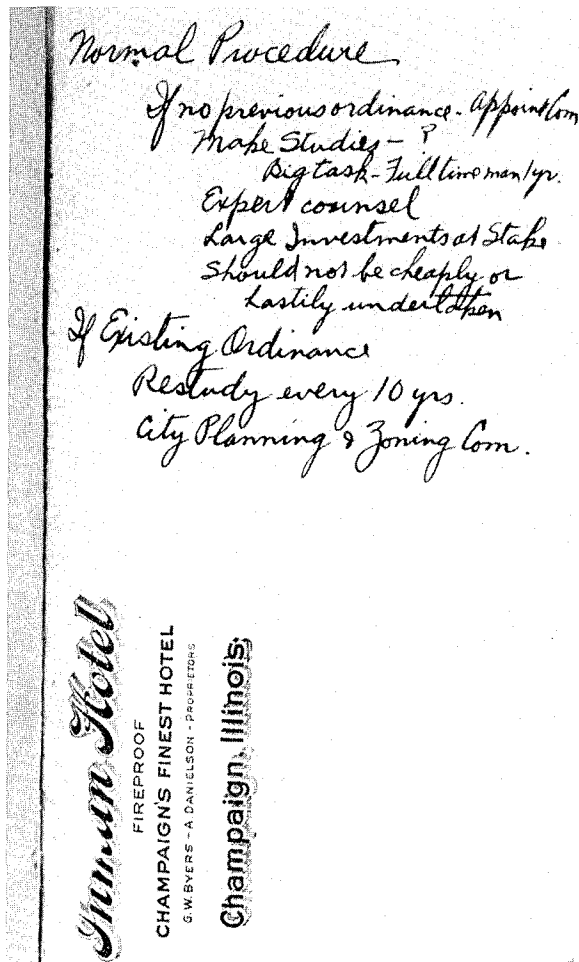
to complete the book.

This was too bad. Excellent as it was, particularly for its time, Lohmann's book suffers from its almost entirely academic approach and purpose. It is a textbook and Lohmann's personal professional experience was limited. The practicing city planner might have been able to have more of his questions answered by *City Planning in Practice*.

TEACHING AT THE OFFICE

Harland Bartholomew and Associates, under Harland Bartholomew's leadership, developed its own way of doing things: of drawing maps and charts (3), of doing surveys, of writing reports--all of the many steps that are taken in the preparation of a comprehensive plan. As previously described, the firm operated on a planned turnover of professional personnel. Consequently, it was necessary to be constantly recruiting and training. This was very much an on-the-job system with new employees earning their way while they learned.

Through many years of experience and careful observation, Harland Bartholomew



48 Harland Bartholomew's notes for a lecture to the class in City Planning at the University of Illinois. Very few of these were saved as he never "re-did" a lecture.

learned many "tricks of the trade." He would tell staff members how to conduct themselves in a meeting and a staff member could learn by watching how HB conducted himself in a meeting. He would give instructions on how to behave after the meeting was over.

Supposing, he would say, that you have attended a planning commission meeting. Almost everything has gone your way. The commission has followed your recommendations. Your normal reaction is to hang around for awhile and chat with the commissioners or even to go out and have a

beer or something stronger with some of them. Don't do it. As soon as the meeting is over, leave. Go home. If you stay and chat or have a drink with them, they are most likely to rehash events of the evening. In so doing, the suspicion that they (and you) were wrong may arise. They might reconsider. I've even seen them reverse themselves. Leave while you are ahead. Go right home.

Harland Bartholomew was particularly effective in training his staff to be effective expert witnesses. When a city (or county) hired Harland Bartholomew and Associates it knew we would defend our plans and zoning regulations competently on the witness stand and would not testify against them.

Harland Bartholomew repaid his debt to John Dana by teaching new staff members to write reports, using the same system of carefully reviewing drafts of reports and discussing them. I was one of many that he taught to write using this system. Staff members would be given other assignments--to investigate problems, to come up with new techniques, to assist in writing, or to write papers on various subjects--that were completely apart from work assignments. By this approach, new professionals were trained and professional growth of the individual was encouraged. Employment at Harland Bartholomew and Associates had many aspects of a post-graduate program.

In "The Foundations of Federal Planning Assistance, A Personal Account of the 701 Program" (4), Carl Fiess, speaking of the planning in the 1950s, said:

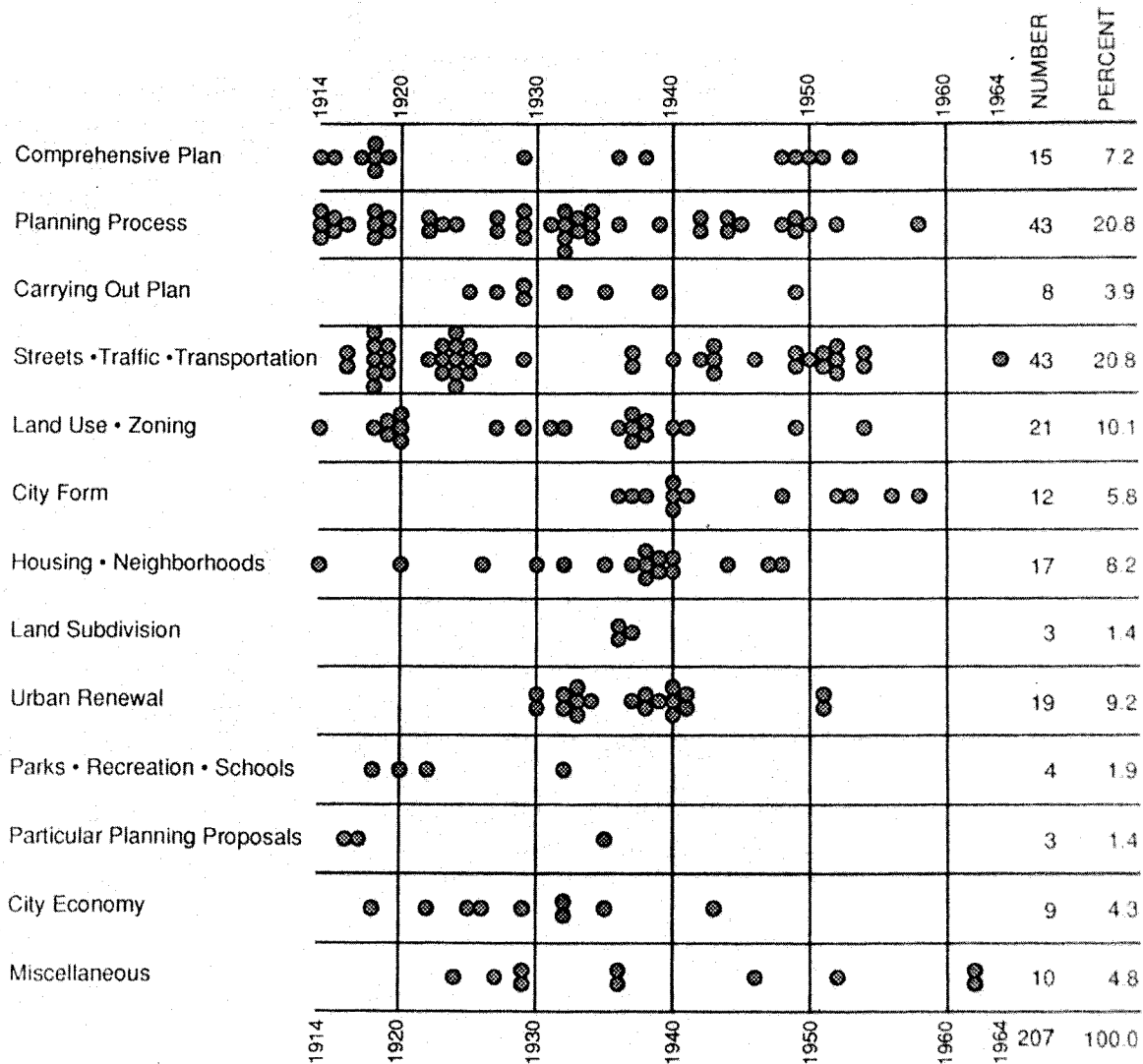
... not only was the condition of local planning poor, but there was a deficiency of well-trained planners to do the few jobs then available. I should note that two of the very best planning schools in the 1940s and 1950s were Harold Miller's on-the-job training programs in Tennessee and the training Harland Bartholomew of St. Louis

ARTICLES AND SPEECHES

by

HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW

1914 - 1964



49 Some 200 of Harland Bartholomew's speeches and articles were studied in order to analyze subject matter and trends. Many groups would specify their subject of interest for an address or article so that this chart does not indicate what he was interested in at a particular time period.

gave to young planners in his several offices.

GENERAL TEACHING

During its early and formative years, urban planning presented a somewhat mysterious aspect to the general public. The "great planner" would be brought in from afar, or at least from out of town and, with a few well-chosen words, show you how you could dispel the urban problems that were plaguing you. In fact, for a time in the years after World War II particularly, urban planning was particularly infected by this "soothsayer" or "guru" approach, and it was very easy for anyone in the urban planning field to identify the leading guru of the moment. Harland Bartholomew disdained this approach completely. Even so, there is little doubt that for a number of years he was the "guru of the moment."

He wrote many articles and gave many speeches on urban development problems. In Norman Johnston's analysis of Harland Bartholomew's work (5), he notes that advanced solutions to urban problems were more frequently found in these articles and speeches than in the comprehensive plans prepared by his firm. This is true. The speeches make more interesting reading than do the reports.

One man could not expect to educate 150 million people; but he could try, and Harland Bartholomew did in these speeches and articles, all carefully prepared and usually serious and solemn. In them, Harland Bartholomew is explaining and describing what we were doing and trying to achieve in urban planning. He is seeking understanding and support. He is teaching.

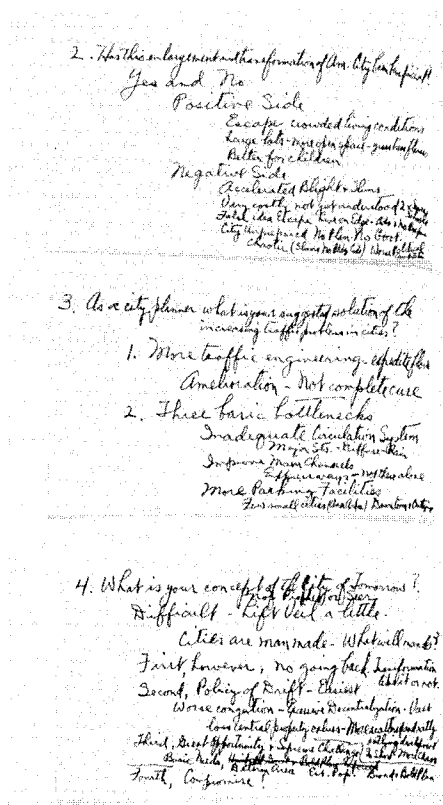
Some 207 of these articles, speeches, and statements remain in the files of the St. Louis office of Harland Bartholomew and Associates. (See Appendix G.) Most of

these have to do with general subjects and not with specific plans or proposals except that, on many occasions, the St. Louis planning work was explained at national meetings. California cities and civil engineers would both be interested in the successful passage of the \$87 million St. Louis bond issue of 1923, for example.

The *American City* magazine or *Engineering News Record* would be interested in such subjects also. Most important, these articles and speeches could be used to generate interest in solutions to problems such as urban deterioration, and as "trial balloons" to get a measure of public reaction to a new solution to an urban problem before a client city was urged to try it out.

Harland Bartholomew had some choice in the subject matter, but only a limited one because most of these articles and statements resulted from invitations to him and very few were self-generated. You would not expect the American Automobile Association, for example, to be interested in listening to a speech on parks. The 207 examples that have been saved represent perhaps half of those that were done. Most of Harland Bartholomew's speeches, like his Illinois lectures, were made from an outline written on the back of an envelope or a small piece of notepaper. Unfortunately, Harland Bartholomew's office did not follow any consistent system of filing, identifying, or dating this material.

Remaining records include about four articles, speeches, statements per year. For some years, there are as many as twelve and for others, none at all. Sometimes the same material may be revised and rearranged to meet the requirements of several assignments. While Harland Bartholomew prepared all final material, staff members in his St. Louis office or on the staffs of the St. Louis or Washington planning departments



50 Typical Outline for a speech by Harland Bartholomew. Outlines such as this were written on any available scrap; were revised many times before being used and even (sometimes) revised while the speech was being given!

would assemble material or prepare drafts. While Harland Bartholomew had a few "ghost writers," none was allowed to go very far.

The most popular of the subjects of these articles and speeches was that of streets, traffic, and transportation. The American love of the automobile extended to the subject matter of the postprandial speaker. Next to driving his car, he loved best to hear someone tell of building roads for it, or of places where he might park it. The second most popular of the subjects was the city planning process--how one went about preparing and adopting a city plan. Almost one-third of the speeches and articles were

devoted to the city plan, the planning process, and how a plan is carried out.

Zoning is the most popular of the several urban planning components. In fact, it would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that without zoning, there might not have been any urban planning at all in the United States. Yet books, articles, and speeches on land use and zoning account for only ten percent of this material.

Starting with the St. Louis Urban Land Policy report in 1936, much of Harland Bartholomew's time was devoted to the problem of rebuilding deteriorated urban areas. (See Chapter VIII) There were 19 articles and speeches on this subject, mostly between 1930 and 1940. A similar interest in housing and neighborhoods is more consistent, throughout the period from 1914 to 1950.

Harland Bartholomew was a firm adherent of the "city efficient" school of urban planning. The economic advantages, and the economic impact, of city planning are the subject matter of nine of the articles and speeches. An interest in the form of the city, which started with his recognition of the impact of the automobile in increasing the area of urbanization (i.e., "decentralization"), was the subject of twelve of the articles and speeches.

Harland Bartholomew was a favorite speaker at national planning meetings or conferences, appearing before the national meetings of the American Institute of Planners or the annual meetings of the American Planning and Civic Association in 1918, 1924, 1928, 1929, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1939, 1941, 1949, 1951 and 1952 (13 of the 50 years). Papers resulting from appearances before the American Society of Civil Engineers are found for the years 1936, 1943, 1948, 1949, and 1964. There were many appearances before

architectural societies, chambers of commerce, mortgage bankers, real estate boards, and the like.

In this extensive material, Harland Bartholomew does not mince any words. In the draft of the preface to "City Planning in Practice" (6), he states:

City planning is that phase of municipal activity which analyzes the character and probable extent of the city's growth, suggests certain physical readjustments, and provides for the coordination of all future improvements.

And in Chapter II, intriguingly called, "The Balanced Plan" (7):

Before the community puts its plan into operation, it must be absolutely sure, first, that it is the best possible plan, and second, that it is feasible, legally and financially.

And before the George Westinghouse Centennial (8):

Each urban area should possess an overall design or master plan. This plan should not be a fixed or rigid mold but it should provide a dynamic framework. Of necessity, it must have a certain degree of flexibility because of changing needs and conditions. Within this framework, however, growth can be directed, and will adjust itself readily to a reasonable pattern

Harland Bartholomew talked to the National Conference on City Planning at Pittsburgh on November 14, 1932 (9), when the great Depression was at its depth, about a program to prevent economic disintegration of American cities--a fate that then seemed more than likely:

All phases of the comprehensive city plan should be given an official status as contemplated by the Standard City Planning Act Without a

definite constructive program of administrative control, as contemplated by a comprehensive city plan, little can be expected beyond a futile endeavor to satisfy the demands of various special interest groups with inevitable complicated physical arrangement, low efficiency, and high taxes. Our city plans have been too timidly conceived and too ineffectively advanced.

He became more and more concerned about the plight of the city of St. Louis, where urban blight seemed about to engulf the entire municipality and, at the end of 1938, prepared a statement for the League of Women Voters (10):

Population is leaving St. Louis because of presumably higher standards of residential development in the County The City Plan Commission of St. Louis has repeatedly pointed out the true remedies for this situation, chief among which are rezoning and neighborhood rehabilitation, and, of course, elimination of the smoke nuisance The Mayor (should) give thoughtful consideration to the recommendations of the City Plan Commission and further the Mayor (should give) the commission more consideration and responsibility in these matters the Plan Commission has been ignored and a new housing committee created by the Mayor, which is equipped neither by training nor experience to deal with these problems.

To Harland Bartholomew, the neighborhood was the real key to planning and rebuilding, "urban redemption," he termed it in telling the National Conference on Planning in Philadelphia on May 13, 1941 (11) that:

. neighborhoods should be so arranged as to produce individual and collective harmony and stability

. certain small suburban communities have succeeded rather well in creating a stable and

satisfactory environment for homes The voice of the neighborhood is the voice of the city in this instance, whereas, in the large city the voice of the neighborhood is inarticulate or ineffective our large cities must help their citizens to improve their environment . . .

. . . There can be no sound municipal government without sound neighborhoods.

It is impossible at this time to write a formula for the neighborhood.

Along the same line, in talking of Replanning the City, he said, in the *St. Louis Review* of May 1932 (12):

Would it not be much more sensible to attempt to bring the desirable attributes of the country to the city rather than to abandon large areas of the central city in an attempt to move a large part of the city population out into the country ?

And again, to the Southern Institute of Local Government at Knoxville in October of 1941 (13):

We sought escape from the city. We thought we could move to the edges, with the city on one side and the country on the other, with the advantages of both and the responsibilities of neither

What gullibility! We can't escape the city. And what a price we are now paying for our shortsightedness.

Yet, not all of these forthright statements are found in the articles and speeches. Many are in the planning reports as well, as these played an important educational role. The same philosophy and the same approach underlie both. For example, in the foreword to the Preliminary Report on Major Streets, Transit, Parks and Playgrounds written for Schenectady, New York, in 1924 (14):

The proper solution of this problem calls for the application of the soundest principles of municipal economics. Haphazard, piecemeal improvements only serve to increase the embarrassment of the city. They make the tax burden more unbearable and they produce no adequate returns. Schenectady can properly solve the problem by making corrections that will effect permanent relief and by directing future growth along more logical and more scientific lines.

SUMMARY

Teaching the techniques and systems used in preparing and carrying out comprehensive city plans is a substantial contribution of Harland Bartholomew--teaching himself, the Illinois students, his staff, and the public at large.

FOOTNOTES

- V-1 *Conversation with writer. See also Harland Bartholomew: His Comprehensive Plans And Science of Planning*, Norman Johnson, page 95
- V-2 *Principles of City Planning*, Karl B. Lohmann, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1931
- V-3 The graphics system was developed by Clarence W. Baughman, FASLA, who undertook most landscape design aspects of the office's practice and who directed the drafting room at the St. Louis office during the 1920s. The graphic system was so clear and distinctive and so readable that the firm could have left its name off the drawings and they would still have been recognized as being products of Harland Bartholomew and Associates. Unfortunately, mechanization and computerization of drafting systems resulted in its abandonment with accompanying loss of both clarity and distinction.
- V-4 *The Foundations of Federal Planning Assistance*, A Personal Account of the 701 Program, Journal of the American Planning Association, Volume 51, No. 2, Spring 1985, page 183
- V-5 See V-1 above, pages 270 and 271.
- V-6- Manuscripts in the St. Louis office of Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Inc.
- V-13 Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Inc.
- V-14 Manuscript in Olin Library, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri.



51 *Charles Mulford Robinson*